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MARVEL
COMICS
GROUP

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#1

THE WORLD'S SILLIEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

Fantastic Four Roast



CAN YOU BELIEVE IT? THE FANTASTIC FOUR-- THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMICS MAGAZINE-- IS NOW IN ITS TWENTIETH YEAR OF CONTINUOUS PUBLICATION!

AND THAT REALIZED MARVEL'S EDITOR-IN-CHIEF JIM SHOOTER, WAS CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION!

BUT NOT JUST ANY OLD CELEBRATION-- NO, THIS WAS SPECIAL. SO WHY NOT HAVE A "ROAST"?

YOU KNOW, THAT'S WHERE THE GUESTS OF HONOR ARE PAID A LOVING TRIBUTE BY THEIR PEERS IN THE FORM OF INSULTS AND JIBES.

SURE, WHY NOT?

MARVEL WANTED TO GET DEAN MARTIN TO HOST THE FESTIVITIES, BUT UNFORTUNATELY HE DOESN'T KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT COMIC BOOKS...

...AND BESIDES, HE COSTS TOO MUCH.

SO INSTEAD THEY GOT ME, FRED HEMBECK, TO HANDLE THE HOSTING DUTIES BECAUSE, FORTUNATELY, I KNOW A LOT ABOUT COMIC BOOKS!

AND BESIDES, I WORK CHEAP...

I'VE BEEN A FAN OF THE F.F. SINCE I PICKED UP A COPY OF THEIR FOURTH ISSUE BACK IN 1962. SO I'M NOT EXAGGERATING WHEN I SAY IT'S A REAL HONOR TO BE WORKING IN TANDEM WITH MARVEL'S MIGHTIEST ARTISTS TO PRODUCE THIS AFFECTIONATE TRIBUTE TO THE GROUP THAT STARTED A COMIC BOOK REVOLUTION. I.O., THOSE MANY YEARS AGO!

OH, AND IF YOU'RE ONE OF THOSE FOLKS WHO TAKES HIS MARVEL UNIVERSE CONTINUITY SERIOUSLY-- AND AFTER ALL, WHO DOESN'T!-- I'D ADVISE YOU NOT TO PUT TOO MUCH STOCK IN THE FOLLOWING TALE.

AFTER ALL, ARE YOU GOING TO BELIEVE A GUY WHO'LL REWRITE DR. DOOM'S ORIGIN FOR THE SAKE OF A CHEAP JOKE?

IT WAS EITHER LAUGHS OR CONTINUITY, SO CONTINUITY WENT OUT THE WINDOW. HOPEFULLY, THERE'LL BE ENOUGH LAUGHS TO COMPENSATE!

BUT ENOUGH STALLING-- LET'S GET ON WITH IT! AFTER ALL, THIS TUX IS ONLY RENTED...

ON THE OPPOSITE PAGE, YOU'LL FIND MY IDEA OF A REAL SPLASH PAGE, AND THAT'S JUST FOR STARTERS...

"WHEN TITANS CHUCKLE!"

WELL, I'VE USED UP MY LAST BOX OF "MR. BUBBLE" BUT IT'S GONNA BE WORTH IT!

AFTER ALL THIS TIME, THOSE OTHER SUPER HEROES--FROM THE AVENGERS TO THE X-MEN--HAVE FINALLY REALIZED SOMETHIN' I ALWAYS THOUGHT WAS OBVIOUS--THE F.F. IS THE WORLD'S GREATEST TEAM!

...THE TORCH NOTWITHSTANDIN', OF COURSE...

STILL, IT'S AWFUL NICE OF OUR BUDDIES IN THE WORLD--SAVIN' BIZ TO SWALLOW THEIR PRIDE AND THROW US A BIG PARTY AT A FANCY NEW YORK HOTEL. IT'S IN HONOR OF THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE DAY WE WENT UP IN REED'S BLAMED ROCKETSHIP, GETTING BOMBARDED WITH COSMIC RAYS, AND TURNING INTO THE FANTASTIC FOUR. AS A RESULT, AT LEAST, THAT'S WHAT THEY TELL ME.

WELL, BENJAMIN J. GRIMM WILL BE THERE, SMELLIN' LIKE A ROSE!

SPEAKIN' OF "SMELLIN'" I JUST HOPE THOSE STINKIN' YANCY STUBBERS DON'T SHOW UP...

STORY & LAYOUTS
FRED HEMBECK
PLOT ASSIST & EDITING
JIM SHOOTER

ART
ALMOST EVERYBODY
LETTERING
JOE ROSEN
COLORING
WEIN / YANCHUS
CAPTIONING
IRVING FORBUSH

"TOAST THE FANTASTIC FOUR!"
YEAH, I LIKE THAT!

DO YOU, BIG BUDDY?
LET'S SEE JUST HOW
TOASTY YOU LIKE IT!



WHAT TH-- I'VE HEARD
OF HOT TUBS, BUT THIS
IS RIDICULOUS!



MY, MY-- THINGS
CERTAINLY ARE
HEATING UP IN
THE BAXTER
BUILDING, AREN'T
THEY?

...PUN INTENDED,
OF COURSE...

YE-OWW!!



TIME TO EXIT--
STAGE LEFT!

WHERE
IS HE??!
I'LL
MURDERIZE
HIM!!

COME DOWN HERE, YA
BLAMED MATCHSTICK, SO'S
I CAN STRIKE YOU!

NOT TILL YOU PUT
SOME CLOTHES
ON, BENJY! I
REFUSE TO FIGHT
A FLASHER!



NO NEED TO WORRY ABOUT
FRANKLIN, SUE, THE DOCTOR
SAID HE'D BE OVER THAT TOUCH
OF SCARLET FEVER IN A FEW DAYS.

I KNOW, REED, BUT...
AND YOU KNOW ALICIA IS
TAKING GOOD CARE OF HIM!



I KNOW,
REED,
BUT...

NO BUTS, HONEY! OUR SON WOULD WANT US
TO ENJOY THE CELEBRATION! OUR FRIENDS WENT
TO A LOT OF TROUBLE FOR US-- FRIENDS LIKE
THE YANCY STREET GANG, COLLINS, OUR LAND-
LORD, THE IMPOSSIBLE MAN, THE TORCH'S OLD
FLAME, DORIS EVANS, AND OUR MAILMAN WILLIE
LUMPKIN--WE CAN'T DISAPPOINT THEM, CAN WE?



I GUESS
NOT, REED.

SPEAKING
OF WILLIE,
TODAY'S
MAIL HASN'T
ARRIVED YET.
THAT'S ODD...

NYAH
NYAH!

WAIT! I
GET MY HANDS
ON YOU, YOU
RIPSQUEAK!

OLD LUMPY IS
PROBABLY WEIGHTED
DOWN WITH BAGS
AND BAGS OF CON-
GRATULATORY MESSAGES.

AREN'T YOU STRETCHING
THINGS A BIT, MR. RICHARDS?

WHY DO YOU
THINK THEY
CALL ME
"MR. FANTASTIC"
MRS. RICHARDS?



...UNTIL LATER THAT EVENING...

YOU AIN'T
SEEN THE
LAST OF
ME!

I'VE ALREADY SEEN
TOO MUCH OF YOU!
DOESN'T REED HAVE
A TOWEL MADE OF
UNSTABLE MOLECULES
AROUND, OR SOME-
THING?



AND SO IT GOES...

...UNTIL LATER THAT EVENING...

HERE'S YOUR ORANGE JUICE,
FRANKLIN-- DRINK UP SO
YOU'LL GET BETTER SOON.

THANKS,
AUNTIE
LICIA.



CAN I PUT THE TV
ON, AUNTIE 'LICIA?
THERE'S SOMETHING
ON I REALLY
WANNA SEE.

WHY, OF COURSE YOU CAN WATCH THE
TELEvised COVERAGE OF THE BANQUET
YOUR PARENTS ARE ATTENDING!

OH, YEAH--
THAT I ALMOST
FORGOT.

DOES THAT MEAN
I CAN'T WATCH
"THE THREE
STOOGES"?

A FLICK OF A
SWITCH, AND...

-- STOOGES "WILL NOT BE SEEN
TONIGHT DUE TO THIS SPECIAL
LIVE PRESENTATION.

THIS IS J. JONAH
JAMESON WITH THE
BIGGEST EXPOSE IN
THE HISTORY OF JOURN--

HARRUMPH.
WELL, JUST
WAIT! I'LL YOU READ
THE EDITORIAL IN
TOMORROW'S
DAILY BUGLE!

JONAH--THIS ISN'T
AN EXPOSE! DO
IT STRAIGHT!!

JONAH!!

OKAY!
OKAY!



"THE AVENGERS ARE
HERE..."

"HERE COME THE
DYNAMIC DEFENDERS..."

"THE INHUMANS
HAVE COME OUT OF
HIDING TO ATTEND
TODAY'S FESTIVITIES..."

"THE X-MEN
ARE HERE..."

"EVEN THE LEGION OF
MONSTERS SHOWED UP!"

"THE HULK LOOKS
LIKE HE WAS BORN
TO WEAR THAT
TUXEDO DOESN'T
HE?"

"NOW THERE'S A
GROUP YOU DON'T
SEE EVERY DAY!"

OUR SOURCES TELL US
THAT MILLIE FEE MODEL
AND FIN FANG FOOM
WILL BE HERE AS SOON
AS MILLIE HELPS FIN
ON WITH HIS TUXEDO...

OH,
BOY!

...SO WHY DO I
HAVE SUCH A
FEELING OF
FORESIDDING?

METANWHILE, AS THE GUESTS OF
HONOR ARRIVE...

HERE YA GO,
LOCKLEY! KEEP
THE CHANGE!

WHAT A
GRIMM
TIP...

HEY, WATCH YER DUST, CABBY!!
GEEZ, AIN'T A DIME WORTH
ANYTHIN' THESE DAYS?

COME ON, OLD FRIEND, THEY'RE
WAITING FOR US INSIDE.

AND ONCE INSIDE...

WELL, I'LL BE...

GOODNESS!

OH, MY...

OY, VEY...

WELCOME, HONORED GUESTS TO THE FANTASTIC FOUR ROAST!

ROAST? I THOUGHT IT WAS GONNA BE A 'TOAST'!

TONIGHT'S BANQUET WILL BE THAT AND MORE, BEN GRIMM. BUT FIRST, PREPARE YOURSELF TO GRIN AND BEAR THE COMMENTS OF YOUR SUPER-POWERED PEERS! THEY'RE A FUN BUNCH OF GUYS AND GALS, AS I'M SURE YOU'RE AWARE!

"THE ROAST," AS YOU PROBABLY KNOW, IS AN OLD SHOW BUSINESS TRADITION, AND IF YOU'RE WONDERING WHAT SHOW BUSINESS HAS TO DO WITH FOLKS IN YOUR LINE OF ENDEAVOR, I ASK YOU, WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU SAW SUCH A FLASHY COLLECTION OF CLOTHES?

NOT SINCE LIBERACE TOOK HIS WARDROBE DOWN TO THE DRY CLEANERS, I'LL BET!



OK, PARDON ME FOR NOT INTRODUCING MYSELF--- I'M YOUR HOST, FRED HEMBECK!



THERE WILL BE A SHORT PAUSE NOW WHILE EVERYONE SAYS, "SO WHAT?" AND THEN ON WITH THE FESTIVITIES!

MR. FANTASTIC, THING, INVISIBLE PERSON, HUMAN TORCH--- IT'S A PLEASURE TO HAVE YOU HERE TONIGHT, AND YOU HAVE MY WORD, THERE'LL BE NO PIES IN THE FACE WHILE I'M IN CHARGE!



OF COURSE, THAT'S ABOUT ALL I'LL PROMISE, HEH, HEH!

WELL, TORCH, DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHO OUR FIRST SPEAKER IS?

NO, I DON'T, FRED. IN FACT, I DON'T SEE ANYONE APPROACHING THE Dais.

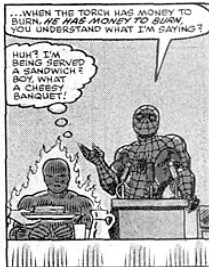
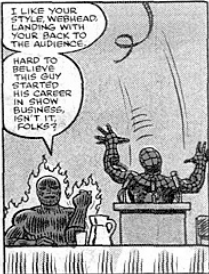


THAT'S BECAUSE YOU DON'T LOOK UP FLAME-BRAIN!

YES, FOLKS, IT'S OUR FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD SPIDER-MAN!



WHY'S IT GOTTA BE MY NEIGHBORHOOD?



JUST SAY THE WORD, REED, AND I'LL GLADLY TURN HIS MACE INTO GLASS! THE NERVE OF HIM SHOWING UP HERE TONIGHT!

NO, JOHNNY, WAIT!

GETTING HOT UNDER THE COLLAR, SONNY BOY?

TOUGH! I WAS INVITED!

UH... THAT'S RIGHT, FOLKS. AFTER ALL, WHAT WOULD THE FANTASTIC FOUR BE WITHOUT THEIR FOES? ALL OF WHOM, I'D LIKE TO HASTILY ADD, HAVE AGREED TO ABUSE THE F.F. VERBALLY ONLY THIS EVENING!

YEAH, BUT THAT DON'T MEAN I GOTTA PUT UP WITH YOU, PUNK! HERE, LET ME GIVE YOU A HAND OFF!

OOPS!

THE PUNK'S GOT A POINT, THOUGH, WITHOUT US BAD GUYS THE F.F. WOULD BE OUT OF BUSINESS TOMORROW.

"BAD GUYS LIKE THE MAD THINKER..."

WHAT? HE WORRY?

"PHARAOH RAMA TUT..."

AND I MAY OR MAY NOT BE DR. DOOM AS WELL. IN FACT, AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER, I WAS KANG, IMMORTUS, THE SCARLET CENTURION, AND THE TIDY BOWL MAN!

NO RELATION TO KING TUT, HOWEVER.

"ANNIHILUS..."

JUST CALL ME LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIHILUS

"THE MOLECULE MAN..."

REED RICHARDS THINKS HE KNOWS SO MUCH ABOUT UNSTABLE MOLECULES! WHY, IN MY HEAD ALONE...

"PSYCHO-MAN..."

DON'T BE AFRAID UNDER THIS MASK, I'M REALLY TONY PERKINS. WANNA MEET MY MOM?

"THE RED GHOST AND HIS SUPER APES..."

THEY'RE THE GORILLAS OF MY DREAMS!

VOOTIE!

"DIABLO, THE HATE MONSTER, AND THE MOLE MAN..."

I'D PROBABLY ENJOY THIS BEER MORE IF I HAD A MOUTH OPENING IN MY HOOD...

THIS IS THE ONLY WAY TO BEAT THAT LOUSY NEW YORK TRAFFIC...

"THE MIRACLE MAN, AND THE ALIEN SKRULLS..."

SAY, I THOUGHT YOU SKRULLS WERE ALL GREEN-SKINNED. WHO'S THAT?

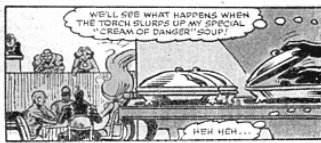
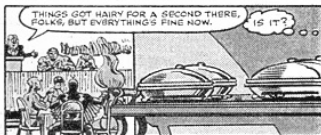
THAT? THAT'S THE RED SKRULL, OF COURSE...

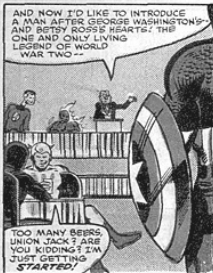
"GALACTUS, THE PUPPET MASTER, AND THE INVINCIBLE MAN..."

WHERE ARE THE HORROR D'OEUVRES?

DON'T BE A DUMMY, MASTERS! YOU KNOW WHAT'LL HAPPEN IF ALICIA MARRIES GRIMM?

DON'T REMIND ME! I'LL BECOME THE THING'S S-HOCKEY FATHER-IN-LAW!





--CAPTAIN AMERICA!

THIS IS FOR THE BIRDS... AND THE FALCON SHOULD KNOW!



UH...BUT BEFORE I GET STARTED I'D BETTER RUN!

NO WONDER THEY CALL HIM THE WHIZZER...

WOULD YOU BE KIND ENOUGH TO HOLD MY SHIELD WHILE I'M AT THE PODIUM, SON?



WOULD I? IT'D BE THE BIGGEST THRILL OF MY LIFE!

REMEMBER WHISKERS, DON'T YIELD, HOLD CAP'S SHIELD!

FORTY YEARS AGO, AMERICA CALLED THROUGHOUT THE LAND FOR MEN TO HELP PUT A STOP TO THE INSIDIOUS NAZI MENACE.



FREEDOM-LOVING MEN FROM ALL OVER THIS GREAT LAND OF OURS STEPPED FORWARD IN OUR HOUR OF NEED. I MYSELF WAS TRANSFORMED FROM A SCRAWNY 4-F INTO AMERICA'S SUPER-SOLDIER.



AND WHO CAN FORGET SGT. FURY AND HIS HOWLING COMMANDOS DUM DUM, PINKY, IZZY, GABE, ERIC AND REB? SOME OF YOU MAY ALSO RECALL CAPTAIN SAVAGE AND HIS LEATHERNECK RAIDERS.

I MYSELF ONLY VAGUELY REMEMBER COMBAT KELLY AND HIS DEADLY DOZEN, HOWEVER...



3SNIFF

BUT HOW MANY PEOPLE RECALL THAT REED RICHARDS AND BEN GRIMM ALSO FOUGHT IN THE BIG ONE? YUP, IT'S TRUE!



NOW I WAS IN SUSPENDED ANIMATION FOR A COUPLE OF DECADES --IN ICE ON ICE, YOU MIGHT SAY-- WHICH EXPLAINS ME--



-- BUT THESE TWO GUYS HAVE GOT TO BE THE *OLD-EST* SUPERHEROES AROUND, FER GOSHAKES!



NOBODY'D BE ABLE TO GUESS YOUR AGE, BEN. NOBODY'D WANT TO...



IT'S MY ROCK HARD SKIN, CAP. JUST KEEP THE PIGEONS AWAY, DUST ME OCCASIONALLY, AND I'M HAPPY.

I'LL BET YOU ARE.

AND WHAT'S THE SECRET OF YOUR YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE, REED?

I GUESS IT MUST BE MY RUBBERY COMPLEXION, CAP...



--THAT, PLUS THE FACT THAT I REGULARLY DUNK MY HEAD IN PALAOVINE DISHWASHING DETERGENT!



WHERE'S MADGE WHEN YOU NEED HER?

REED, I THINK WE *ALL* BETTER LEAVE THE JOKES TO THE OTHERS...



ONE THING ABOUT RICHARDS' KOFF KOFF --HE ALWAYS BOUNCES BACK--

--WHETHER HE WANTS TO OR NOT! KOFF KOFF KOFF KOFF KOFF KOFF

AW FORGET IT-- I GAVE UP DRINKING. I CAN GIVE UP SMOKING TOO.

HMM, LET'S SEE, I GAVE UP SMOKING, I GAVE UP DRINKING, ALL THAT'S LEFT TO GIVE UP IS-- NO, NOT THAT! MY--OR STARK'S PLAYBOY IMAGE?!



HEY! ROLLER DISCO IS MY BAG!

DOTCH! A ROYAL FLUSH!



I SHOULD'VE KNOWN BETTER THAN TO PLAY CARDS WITH JACK OF HEARTS...



MORE VODKA, EH, COMRADE?

...BUT THE ONE THING I ENVY REED RICHARDS--

WHAT A CAPITALIST HUNK!



WHO DOES HE THINK HE IS? LOVER BOY STARK?

OH, IRON MAN! SQUEE!



YOU REALLY THINK SO?



---THOUGH, LUCKILY FOR YOU, YOU HAVE A FORCE FIELD TO KEEP YOUR ADMIRERS AT BAY.

SMOOCH SMOOCHS

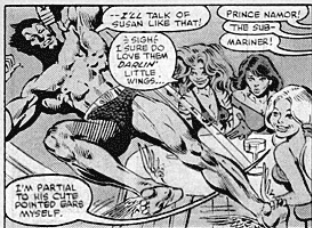
TELL ME MORE.



EH?

WHA?

AW...



--I'LL TALK OF SUSAN LIKE THAT!

PRINCE NAMOR!
THE SUB-
MARINER!

I SIGHT
I SURE DO
LOVE THEM
DARIN'
LITTLE
WINGS...

I'M PARTIAL
TO HIS CUTE
POINTED EARS
MYSELF.

WERE IT NOT FOR
THE FANTASTIC FOUR,
I'D STILL BE AN
AMNESIAC WANDERING
AROUND NEW
YORK'S BOWERY.

LUCKILY FOR
ME, THE TORCH
SAW MY EXPLOITS
IN AN OLD COMIC
MAGAZINE, AND
SO RECOGNIZED
ME EVEN WITH A
BEARDED VISAGE.

WHO COULD
MISS THOSE
EARS?!



GREETINGS, OLD
FRIENDS! OR IS
IT FOES?--GLAD
TO SEE ME?

DELIGHTED...

IT'S A DAY THE TORCH
HAS LONG REGRETTED.

YOUR WATER, SIR.

AFTER ALL IF HE HAD SAVED
THAT COMIC BOOK, IT WOULD BE
WORTH A GREAT DEAL OF
MONEY TODAY!

WHAT'D YOU EVER SEE IN
THIS COLD FISH, SUSIE?

DRY
UP,
SEN.



THIS GUYS
ALL WET...

BUT IT WAS SUSAN THAT
I WAS ENAMORED OF
HEH...AH, SUSAN,
LOVELY SUSAN...

WHEN IT WAS ANNOUNCED
THAT SHE WOULD MARRY
RICHARDS! AND NOT A.E.,
I TRIED TO KEEP UP
A COOL FACADE--



TEE
HEE!



--BUT INSIDE,
MY HEART WAS
BREAKING. IN
FACT, FOR A LONG
TIME AFTERWARD,
I WAS A
VERITABLE--



--IMPERIOUS
WRECK!!

FOR QUITE
SOME TIME,
MY ROMANTIC
FEELINGS LAY
DORMANT...

OH NAM...

BUT ENOUGH REMINISCENCE.
HERE'S A MAN WHO NEEDS
NO INTRODUCTION AND I'M
TEMPTED TO GIVE HIM
NONE--

BAH!



HERE HE
IS, THE
GREEN
HENRY
YOUNGMAN
HIMSELF--



--THE INCREDIBLE,
INEDIBLE HULK!

WAY TO GO,
LETTUCE LIPS!

IF YOU KNEW ABOUT
THE SHE-HULK AND ME, RICK,
YOU'D BE GREEN WITH ENVY!

HULK HAS PREPARED
MATERIAL HERE
SOMEWHERE...

GOOD! HULK FIND
PAPER WITH FUNNY
JOKES ON IT!

HUH! HULK CAN'T
READ PUNY WORDS!

THERE! THAT'S BETTER!
NOW HULK CAN READ
PUNY JOKES!

"WHY DID PUNY HUMAN
THROW CLOCK OUT
OF WINDOW?"

GIVE UP?

"TO SEE IF TIME
COULD FLY!"

HA HA HA!

"WHY DID HULK THROW
PUNY HUMAN OUT OF
WINDOW?"

DON'T KNOW?

"TO SEE IF PUNY
HUMAN COULD FLY!"

HA HA HA HA
HA HA HA HA!!

PUNY AUDIENCE
DOESN'T THINK HULK'S
JOKES ARE
FUNNY?!?



UH, HULK? I'M SORRY,
BUT YOUR TIME IS UP.
IT'S TIME TO SERVE
THE SALAD. SAY, MAYBE
YOU'D CARE TO STAY
FOR THAT, IT BEING
GREEN AND ALL,
HEH HEH...



YOUR SALAD, MS. RICHARDS. AS THEY SAY, LETTUCE ENTERTAIN YOU. HEH HEH.

MY, MY-- FUNNY BUTLERS, TOO. EH, JARVIS? WE CERTAINLY ARE GETTING THE TREATMENT TODAY!

MUNCH CRUNCH

...AT LEAST HE'S NOT EATING WITH HIS CLAWS...

YOUR TREATMENT IS JUST BEGINNING, INVISIBLE GIRL, AS YOU'LL SOON FIND OUT WHEN YOU DISCOVER--

"--MY HYDRO DISC!"

WHO? I THOUGHT PRIZES CAME IN CRACKER-JACK BOXES. NOT SALADS?!?...

IT--IT'S TRYING TO SAP MY WILL!

I--I FEEL LIKE I DO WHEN I'VE BEEN WATCHING TV TOO LONG!

WELL, IF I CAN TURN THE TUBE OFF--!!

BEN, I WONDER IF YOU COULD HELP ME. YOU SEE, I'M HAVING A PROBLEM WITH MY SALAD, AND--

OH, TRYIN' TO KEEP THAT GIRLISH FIGURE OF YOURS IN GOOD SHAPE FOR OLD STRINGBEAN, EH?

WHEN! BY TURNING THE DEVICE INVISIBLE I'VE RENDERED IT HARMLESS!

--UNTIL BEN JUST ATE IT!

BLEARRGHHH!

ALWAYS GLAD TO PLAY CUPID, SUE-- ESPECIALLY WHEN MY STOMACH GETS FILLED IN THE PROCESS!

NO, BEN, YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND!

BUT I DO, SUE. WE MUSTN'T ALARM THE OTHERS, SO WE'LL TAKE CARE OF THIS QUIETLY. TELL ME, IS THE HYDRO-DEVICE STILL INVISIBLE?

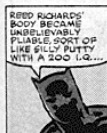
IT WAS--

GOOD WORK, BEN!

"I HOPE EVERYONE ENJOYED THEIR SALADS. NOW I'D LIKE TO INTRODUCE OUR NEXT SPEAKERS--"

CHOMP CHOMP





IF YOU'RE WONDERING WHAT HAPPENED TO WONDER MAN, WONDER NO MORE. HE'S OUT SHOOTING A COMMERCIAL-- FOR WONDER BREAD, WITH MUSIC BY STEVE WONDER. HEH...

NOW STRAIGHT FROM HIS BOFFO APPEARANCE WITH THE AVENGERS, IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE INDEED TO INTRODUCE THAT OLD SON OF A GOD HIMSELF, THE MIGHTY THOR!



VERILY I COME BEFORE YOU TO HONOR A GROUP OF MORTALS SO CELEBRATED THAT THEIR EXPLOITS ARE FOLLOWED EVEN BY THOSE WHO DWELL BEYOND THE RAINBOW BRIDGE.



IN FACT, THE GODS OF FABLED ASGARD HAVE CHOSEN ME AS THEIR MESSENGER ON THIS DAY OF DAYS.



BENEATH MY HELMET I HAVE AN ASGARDIAN PROCLAMATION, WHICH I PRESENT TO YOU, BEN GRIMM, ON BEHALF OF THE ALL-FATHER ODIN AND HIS ROYAL COURT.

AIN'T YOU GUYS GOT ANY POCKETS IN THAT OUTFIT?



HUH?

HEY, GOLDBLOCKS, I CAN'T READ THIS!!



OF COURSE NOT. IT'S IN *NORSE CODE*!

O-O-O-O-O...



SO, GRIMM, YOU PERSIST IN REFERRING TO ME AS "GOLDBLOCKS". WHY MUST A MAN AS BIG AS YOU STOOP TO HARBORING SUCH A PETTY JEALOUSY?

WHA--? JEALOUS? JEALOUS OF WHAT?



MY HAIR, BALD ONE!



YOU ARE THE BALDEST MAN I HAVE EVER MET. YOU HAVE NARY A HAIR ON YOUR ENTIRE BODY. WHY YOU'RE SO BALD, I HAVE A FRIEND WHO'S *BALDER*, AND YET HE HAS MORE HAIR THAN YOU DO!

OH, YEAH, WISE GUY? PROVE IT!!



WITH PLEASURE, *BALDER*?

GREETINGS, THUNDER GOD!



JUST ONE QUESTION, THOR...

YES, BEN GRIMM?



ISN'T IT ABOUT TIME FOR SOMEONE *ELSE* TO GET UP HERE ???

METHINKS IT IS GRIMM, METHINKS IT IS...



I AM UATU. MEN CALL ME THE WATCHER.

WOMEN CALL ME PEEPING UATU.

AND I'M THE COSMIC BEACH BOY, THE SILVER SURFER, AND I HAD FUN FUN FUN UNTIL GALACTUS TOOK MY FREEDOM AWAY. STILL, I GET AROUND.

HEY, WONG-- GIDEON-- PROF X-- ANYBODY! GET JARVIS'S ATTENTION. I WANT MY MOLSON'S ALE!

GEEZ, IF I WANTED TO ABSORB SOME HAIR, I WOULDN'T HAVE MUCH LUCK AND DIS BUNCH...

I AM PRIVY TO MORE ALTERNATE REALITIES THAN ANY OTHER MAN ALIVE TODAY.

'CEPT FOR MAYBE TIMOTHY LEARY OF COURSE...

AN ALTERNATE REALITY IS ONE WHICH IS JUST LIKE THE ONE WHICH YOU'RE FAMILIAR WITH, PERHAPS ONE SEEMINGLY INSIGNIFICANT DETAIL CHANGED.

BET YOUR FAVORITE IS THE ONE WHERE YOU'VE GOT HAIR. HUH, BIG GUY?

THROUGHOUT THE HIGH INFINITE PLANES OF REALITY, THERE ARE SCORES OF BEINGS WHO CALL THEMSELVES THE FANTASTIC FOUR.

ONE OF MY FAVORITE GROUPINGS CONSISTS OF REED RICHARDS, SUB STORM, JOHNNY STORM, AND BROOKE SHIELDS AS THE THING!

WOW! I BET ON THAT WORLD, "ENDLESS LOVE" WAS A HORROR MOVIE!

WASN'T IT EVERYWHERE?

AND HOW ABOUT "THE CREATURE FROM THE BLUE LAGOON"?

HEY, REMEMBER HOW YOU MET THE F.F. WHEN YOU WERE LIVING UP ON THE MOON--YEAH, THEY FINALLY MADE IT TO THE MOON--REMEMBER THAT? WHAT A BIG DISCOVERY FOR THEM--A BIG, BALD GUY WITH A SQUARE HEAD WEARING A SHEET! HAH!

NOW ME THEY REMEMBER. A LOT OF CREDIT GOES TO MY EX-BOSS GALACTUS, OF COURSE. AFTER ALL, WHEN WE FIRST MET, HE WAS ABOUT TO EAT THE F.F.'S PLANET.

A GUY LIKE THAT YOU DON'T FORGET...

I WISH YOU HADN'T SAID THAT...

WHAT? ABOUT THE MOON? HEY, I--

NO, ABOUT EATING.

EATING?

WATCHING YOU GO ROUND AND ROUND AND ROUND IS MAKING ME WANT TO WHOOOP MY COSMIC COOKIES!

BUT--

AND YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT FOOD?!

BUT--

THANKS. THANKS A LOT.

3URP!

AND IF YOU DON'T MIND, I'D LIKE MY CAME BACK NOW!

...THE NERVE OF
SOME PEOPLE...

DAREDEVIL!

HOW'D YOU
GET HERE,
HORNHEAD--
YOU CAN'T
FLY?!

HE'S
TALKIN'
ABOUT
NERVES?!

HEY, DO I ASK YOU WHY
YOU'RE NOT SCORCHING
THE TABLECLOTH?

UH...

WE'VE
GOTTA
KEEP OUR
TRADE
SECRETS
SECRET,
DON'T
WE?

TALK TO OUR LAWYER, MATT
MURDOCK. IF YOU WANT TO GET
TECHNICAL... SPEAKING OF WHICH,
HE'S TOLD ME ABOUT YOU GUYS.
INSURANCE COMPANIES
HATE YOU. CAN YOU
BLAME 'EM?

"LIKE HOWABOUT THAT
TIME THE TORCH WENT TO A
SELF SERVICE GAS STATION?"

OOPS...

YEAH,
I HEARD
ABOUT
THAT,
TOO!

HOT
SHOTS
WERE
PUMPING
UP THE
FANTASTIC
WHEN HE
SPOTTED
THE PRETTY
YOUNG
THING
BEHIND
THE CASH
REGISTER.

"NATURALLY, WE WANTED
TO IMPRESS THE YOUNG
LADY..."

AND
WHAT
BETTER
WAY THAN
TO FLAME
ON AND
SHOW HER
THAT HE'S
THE WORLD
FAMOUS
HUMAN
TORCH?

I GUESS I
SHOULDN'T
JUST SHOWN
HER MY
AMERICAN
EXPRESS
CARD...

"WELL, YOU CAN ALL
FIGURE OUT WHAT HAPPENED
NEXT, CAN'T YOU?"

OOPS...

AND WHAT ABOUT THE
THING? WHEN HE GOES
INTO A CHINA SHOP THE
OWNERS GET RIGHT ON
THE PHONE TO THEIR
INSURANCE COMPANIES--

-- AND THAT'S
NO BULL!

THE EVER INTELLIGENT
MR. FANTASTIC DOESN'T
WRACK THINGS, BUT DO
YOU REALIZE HOW UP-
SET BIG BUSINESS GETS
WHEN HE *CREATES*
THINGS?

IT'S THE
AMERICAN
WAY!

AND THEN THERE'S THE
OFTEN FORGOTTEN
FOURTH MEMBER
OF THE F.F....

...I JUST WISH I
COULD REMEMBER
WHO IT WAS...

WELL, IT'S NOT
IMPORTANT...

BUT SERIOUSLY, FOLKS,
THE F.F. ARE A GREAT
BUNCH, AND IF THERE'S
ANY DEFECTS IN THEIR
CHARACTERS AT ALL, ...
WELL...

...I SURE
CAN'T SEE
THEM!

GOTTA
SWING.
BYE!



AND HERE THEY ARE, FOLKS, THE SUPER GROUP OF THE EIGHTIES, THE UNUSUAL X-MEN!

THANKS, FRED! I'D LIKE TO SAY WHAT A PLEASURE IT IS TO BE HERE TODAY. BUT THEN I'D BE LYING, CONSIDERING HOW POPULAR WE'VE BECOME RECENTLY, I CAN'T HELP BUT THINK THIS BANQUET SHOULD BE FOR US, NOT THE F.F. ...

PHEW! WHAT STINKS?



STILL, WE FIGURED WE COULD SPARE SOME TIME FROM THE PROMOTIONAL TOUR FOR NIGHTMARE'S NEW BOOK, "MOM BAME" TO SALUTE THE SENIOR CITIZENS OF SUPERHEROdom, THE FEEBLE--ER--FANTASTIC FOUR!

WHEN IT COMES TO MUSIC, YOU'RE PARTIAL TO THE OLD STANDARDS, AREN'T YOU, BEN GRIMM?

SO HOWABOUT A ROUSING CHORUS OF "STORMY WEATHER"?



HOWABOUT "RAINY DAYS AND SLOW DANCE" ALWAYS BRING ME DOWN"-- ESPECIALLY WHEN I GOTTA ATTEND A COCKA-MAME BANQUET ON 'EM??

YOU'RE ON THE HOT SEAT TONIGHT, TOUGH, IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE, IF YOU DON'T MIND A MORE LITERAL INTERPRETATION!



QUITE AN EYEFUL, WOULDN'T YOU AGREE?

I HEAR YOU STRETCH REAL GOOD, BIG BRAIN. THINK YOU CAN STRETCH AROUND MY CLAWS?

WOLFBREMS, THAT'S NOT FUNNY...

SO WHO DO I LOOK LIKE? BOB HOPE?



WHAT'S WITH YOU GUYS, CYCLOPS? WHY ARE YOU ACTING LIKE THIS?



WHERE--WHERE ARE WE?

GOSH, MAGNETO MUST'VE BEEN CONTROLLING OUR MINDS!

YEAH, THAT'S IT...



BUT WE'RE FREE FROM HIS INFLUENCE NOW, THANKS TO YOU! BY GOLLY, WHAT CAN I SAY? WE'LL BE ETERNALLY GRATEFUL THAT'S FOR SURE!

3 SHIKKRE



HEY, IT'S GETTING LATE! GOTTA RUN -- BYE!



HEY! MAGNETO DOESN'T CONTROL MINDS! GET BACK HERE!!



BOY, THOSE X-MEN SURE ARE BECOMING ARROGANT!

JOHNNY, YOUR BURN LOOKS PRETTY BAD!

IS THERE A DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE?

DR. STRANGE???

YOU WERE EXPECTING DR. OCTOPUS?

I HAVE JUST THE SPELL FOR YOU, JOHNNY STORM. IT WORKED ON KANSAS CITY ROYALS THIRD BASEMAN GEORGE BRETT, SO IT SHOULD WORK FOR YOU.

AAAAHHHHH...

I CALL IT "PREPARATION S".

NOW, DR. STRANGE REALLY ISN'T A VERY FUNNY GUY.

YOU SEE, UNFORTUNATELY THE MAN IS LONG-WINDED TO A FAULT.

SUPER HEROES ARE A GENERALLY POLITE BUNCH SO THEY WON'T COMPLAIN ABOUT DOC OVERSTAYING HIS WELCOME.

AS A RESULT, HE PROMISES ON AND ON...

...THE HOURS TO DAYS...

BUT THAT'S NOT WHY WE'RE DELETING HIS MONOLOG.

...THE MINUTES TURNING TO HOURS...

...THE DAYS TO WEEKS...

...THE WEEKS TO MONTHS? OH, ALL RIGHT, SO MAYBE HE WASN'T TALKING THAT LONG! IT SURE SEEMED LIKE IT!

FINALLY... ...AND BY THE ALL SEEING EYE OF ALLEN FUNT, I SAY TO YOU--

GAD! FORTY MINUTES, YOU'VE BEEN TALKING FOR AN ETERNITY!!

NO MORE COFFEE, THANK YOU. IT MIGHT KEEP ME AWAKE.

ZZZZ...

ZZZZ...

ZZZZ...

I'M AN ETERNITY-- WILL I DO?

BY THE HOARY HOSTS OF HOWARD JOHNSONS!

I'VE HEARD OF "MR. UNIVERSE," BUT THIS GUY TAKES THE CAKE!

WILL YOU FOLLOW ME, DR. STRANGE?

FROM HERE TO ETERNITY...

THERE THEY GO-- GONE WITH THE WIND...

HEH HEH... AND NOW, THE
MOMENT WE'VE **ALL** BEEN
WAITING FOR-- THE MAIN
COURSE IS ABOUT TO
BE SERVED!



ENJOY YOUR
MEAL, FOLKS!

REED RICHARDS WON'T
ENJOY *HIS* MEAL!



NOT WHEN
THE MAIN
COURSE IS...
DEATH!

OBOY!
CHICKEN!

(IF I MIGHT CORRECT YOU, MASTER
TORCH, THIS ISN'T MERELY CHICKEN,
THIS IS ROCK, CORNISH HEN, A SUGG-
LENT YOUNG FOWL, SERVED WITH
STUFFING **AND** MASHED POTATOES.



PEAS WERE INCLUDED
TO APPEASE THE HULK.

MMM-MMM! THIS
STUFFING CERTAINLY
IS DELICIOUS!



SAY, WHAT HAVE
I UNCOVERED--
A TOOTHPICK?...
**NO! IT'S A TINY
MACHINE GUN!**



AND--AND IT'S FORCE
FEEDING ME TINY
BULLETS!



LUCKILY, THE STUFFING IS
ACTING AS A SILENCER--SO
MY PLIGHT WON'T ATTRACT
UNDUE ATTENTION.



AS FOR THE BULLETS,
I'LL JUST LET MY
PLIABLE SKIN TAKE
CARE OF THAT
LITTLE PROBLEM.



I'LL JUST SPIT OUT THESE
NOW HARMLESS SLUGS.



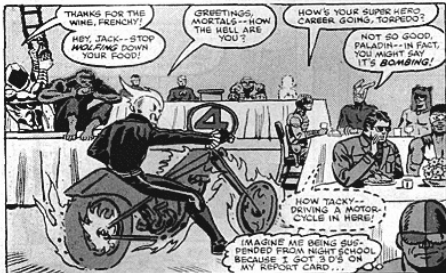
HAMM, REMINDS ME
OF WATERMELON.

REED, WHAT WAS THAT NOISE?

NOTHING, JOHNNY, JUST
A LITTLE GAS.
OH, AREN'T YOU
ENJOYING YOUR
CHICKEN?

YES, I AM,
JOHNNY--AND
THAT'S ROCK,
CORNISH HEN,
NOT CHICKEN.







WE'RE SITTIN' DUCKS UP HERE,
THERE'S NO DENYIN' *THAT!*

FIRST JUNIOR FINDS A BOMB
IN HIS SOUP, THEN SUSIE
GETS A HYPNO-DISC ALONG
WITH HER SALAD, AND FINALLY,
STRETCHO WINDS UP LOOKIN'
AT A MACHINE GUN STICKIN'
OUT OF THE BACK OF A BIRD!

YOUR ICE
CREAM, SIR.

THANKS...

IT DOESN'T TAKE A GENIUS
TO FIGURE OUT THAT EACH
COURSE OF TONIGHT'S MEAL
WAS SPECIALLY PREPARED
TO GIVE EACH ONE OF US
A PERMANENT CASE OF
FOOD POISONING, SO I--

--I--I--
YII--YIIII....

NOT
AGAIN...

CHOCOLATE, VANILLA AND
STRAWBERRY TRIFLE
THREAT, HUH?

Y'KNOW, I
WAS IN
PRETTY
GOOD
HUMOR
UNTIL YOU
CAME ALONG,
PAL.

I'M GLAD THIS IS A WEEK-
NIGHT! WHEN IT COMES TO
FIGHTIN' ICE CREAM MON-
STERS, I GOT *ONE* RULE...

NEVER ON
SUNDAE!

BRUTE FORCE IS GETTING
YOU NOWHERE, BEN.

YOU GOT ANY
BETTER IDEAS?

HERE.

A SPOON?!!

IF YOU CAN'T
BEAT 'EM,
EAT 'EM!

TOO BAD YOU AIN'T MADE OUTA
MINT CHOCOLATE CHIP...

OH, WELL, I'D BETTER
TAKE A DEEP BREATH,
BECAUSE AS MUCH AS
I HATE TO ADMIT IT,
LOOK OUT, WORLD--

--IT'S
SLOBBERIN'
TIME!!

SLURP SLURP
GOBBLE GOBBLE
CHOMP CHOMP YUM
YUM EATUM UP
SLURP SLURP
GOBBLE GOBBLE
CHOMP CHOMP
YUM YUM EATUM
UP EATUM UP!

--OOOOOO--
I CAN'T BELIEVE
I ATE THE
WHOLE THING...

AWRIGHT--I'M *MAD!*
BESIDES REED, THERE'S
ONLY *ONE* OTHER GUY
WITH ENOUGH ON THE
BALL TO SABOTAGE
OUR SUPPER--

--DR. DOOM!

WRONG, CAMEL BREATH...



DR. DOOM, DR. DOOM, DR. DOOM!! WHY IS IT THAT EVERYONE ALWAYS ASSUMES THAT DR. DOOM IS THE CULPRIT RESPONSIBLE?

WELL, IT SURE AIN'T SOUPY SALES, TIN HEAD!



CALM DOWN, SON. WE DON'T KNOW THAT FOR CERTAIN...

BAH! I SEE THAT SOME PEOPLE WILL **NEVER** CHANGE!

...I CHANGE EACH MORNIN', HOW ABOUT YOU, DOOMSIE?



"WHAT DID YOU DO WITH JIMMY HOFFA, DR. DOOM? WHY'D YOU SET OFF AT ST. HELENS, DR. DOOM?" ...PEOPLE BLAME ME FOR **EVERYTHING!!**



AND **WHOSE** FAULT IS THAT? I'LL TELL YOU WHO-- REED RICHARDS. **THAT'S** WHOSE FAULT IT IS!

LITTLE DID I SUSPECT DURING MY COLLEGE DAYS THAT MY ROOMMATE WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR **RUINING MY LIFE!**



I REMEMBER THAT FATEFUL NIGHT AS IF IT WERE YESTERDAY!

RICHARDS AND HIS COHORTS WENT OFF ON A PARTY RAID OF THE CAPA-ALPHA SORORITY HOUSE, AND THEY DIDN'T INVITE ME!



IMAGINE THAT! THE NERVE OF THEM!

INSTEAD, I WENT OFF TO MY LABORATORY TO WORK ON A VERY COMPLICATED AND DANGEROUS EXPERIMENT, BUT RICHARDS' CALLOUS ACTIONS HAD UPSET ME MORE THAN I HAD REALIZED, SO WHEN I MADE ONE SMALL MISTAKE--



BOOM.

IF I HAD BEEN IN ON THAT PARTY RAID, THE DR. DOOM YOU SEE BEFORE YOU TODAY WOULD NOT EXIST! I COULD HAVE BEEN A **FUN GUY!!**



AS IT IS, EVERYONE SEEMS TO THINK I'M A **DRAG!**

WHREW! I THINK I'LL BE DOING **EVERYONE** A FAVOR IF I END THIS PARTY NOW!



THAT DR. DOOM IS SUCH A **DRAG...**

OH, NO.



I DIDN'T JUST SEE A SHADOWY FIGURE FLIP THE PROVERBIAL SWITCH, DID I?

I'M AFRAID I DID, SIGH.

UH, MAY I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION, EVERYONE? WE SEEM TO HAVE A BIT OF A PROBLEM--

--AND DR. DOOM HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT, YOU UNDERSTAND?



--**WE'RE UNDER ATTACK!** ANYONE WHO'S FINISHED WITH THEIR DINNER, AND WOULD CARE TO HELP, US FEEL FREE.

I HOPE YOU **LOSE!**



WHAT DO YA THINK?

WHY NOT?

AW, GO **RUST!**

OKAY.

JUST LET ME FINISH MY COFFEE...



C'MON, EVERYBODY-- LET'S
BEAT THE STUFFING OUT
OF THIS PARTY POOPER!



THE SIGHT OF SUCH A
MARVELOUS CONGREGATION
OF POWER WAS FORCED OUR
MYSTERY VILLAIN TO RE-
CONSIDER HIS DECISION TO
THROW THE FINAL SWITCH...

N-NO! PLEASE
DON'T HURT
ME--I DIDN'T
MEAN IT--
REALLY I DIDN'T!



IT WAS EASY--
WITH THIS!

GASP! THE
BRAIN SKULL!

Y-YES, IT ALL
BEGAN THIS MOR-
NING WHILE I WAS
CLEANING OUT THE
BASEMENT DOWN AT
THE POST OFFICE...



"WHEN I DIS-
COVERED AN UNDELIVERED
PACKAGE
WHICH HAD
ITS ADDRESS
BLOTTED OUT.

"WHEN I
LOOKED
CLOSER, I
NOTICED
THAT THE
BANKER
BUILDING
WAS THE
RETURN
ADDRESS.

--IS WILLIE LUMPKIN,
OUR MAILMAN!

UH, WOULD YOU LIKE
TO BUY SOME TICKETS
TO THE POSTMAN'S
BALL? NO?

I DIDN'T
THINK SO...



I...DON'T
BELIEVE
IT! THE
VILLAIN
RESPONS-
IBLE FOR
RUINING
OUR MEALS--

YA MEAN
BESIDES THE CHEF,
STRETCH?

I WANT TO APOLO-
GIZE FOR MY ACTIONS,
MR. RICHARDS, BUT I
HAVEN'T BEEN MYSELF
LATELY. LUCKILY, THE
SIGHT OF ALL OF YOU
DESCENDING UPON ME
SHOCKED ME BACK
TO MY RIGHT SENSES.



APOLOGY ACCEPTED,
WILLIE. BUT WHAT I
DON'T UNDERSTAND
IS HOW YOU CAME UP
WITH ALL THE GADGETS
YOU THREW AT US.

"THAT'S WHEN I FELL AND HIT MY
HEAD, COINCIDENTALLY TEARING
OPEN THE PACKAGE IN THE PRO-
CESS. SOMEHOW, THAT KNOCK ON
THE HEAD, COUPLED WITH THE
AROMA OF THAT
AGE-OLD SALONY
SANDWICH...
CHANGED ME. AND
WHEN I PUT THE
THINGAMAJIG
THAT WAS IN THE
PACKAGE ON MY
HEAD, I WAS
SUDDENLY
SMARTER THAN
I'D EVER BEEN
BEFORE!



I'M SORRY, MR. RICHARDS, BUT IT
WASN'T REALLY ME. IT WAS THIS--
WHAT DO YOU CALL IT?

BRAIN SKULL, WILLIE. AN
OLD INVENTION OF MINE
WHICH GIVES ITS WEAKER
MY INTELLECT. I SENT IT TO
THE PENTAGON ON THE EVE
OF THE FATEFUL ROCKETSHIP
RIDE WHICH TRANSFORMED
US INTO THE
FANTASTIC FOUR,
JUST IN CASE WE
DIDN'T COME
BACK.



WHEN WE DID, I ASSUMED
THE PENTAGON HAD CLASSI-
FIED MY INVENTION AND I
PROMPTLY FORGOT ABOUT IT.

SO YOU SEE, WILLIE,
FOR LOSING THAT
PACKAGE IN THE MAIL
FOR SO LONG, THE
REAL VILLAIN TURNS
OUT TO BE THE U.S.
POSTAL SERVICE!



I'M JUST GLAD NO
ONE WAS HURT.

DUE, NO DOUBT
TO YOUR INHERENT
INEPTNESS, WILLIE!

EN?



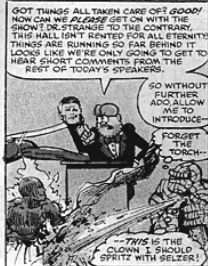
HEH, HEH--
YOUR INHERENT
GOODNESS,
I MEAN!

COME ON--DR. DOOM IS
GOING TO BE FURIOUS
WHEN HE FINDS OUT HE WAS
OUTSTAGED BY A POSTMAN!



"THE FIRST THING
I RAN ACROSS
WHEN I WENT OUT
ON THE STREET
WAS NEWS OF THIS
CELEBRATION.

"I GUESS I REGRETTED
HOW YOU TURNED MY
EAR-WIGGLING POWERS
DOWN FOR MEN-
SHIP YEARS AGO, SO
I SET OUT TO SPOIL
YOUR PARTY."



"...HERODOTUS'S ANSWER TO DONNA SUMMER, THE DAZZLER!"

FOR MY NUMBER TONIGHT, I'M GOING TO SING-- WHAT ELSE?--A TORCH SONG!



WHY COULDN'T IT BE FRANK SINATRA WHO HAD THE SUPER POWERS...?

"...FROM THE FAR FUTURE, STARKAWK AND THE GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY!"

C'MON, BABY, LIGHT MY FIRE!

WE'RE VERY PROUD TO PAY TRIBUTE TO FOUR OF HISTORY'S MOST FANTASTIC HEROES HERE TODAY--

==WHILE THERE'S STILL TIME!



YOU-- YOU KNOW SOMETHING WE DON'T?!

"...BROTHER NOODOO!"

IT'S NOT COMMONLY KNOWN, BUT I ALSO SING AND SING I SHALL, AS SOON AS I DECIDE WHICH SONG TO FAVOR YOU WITH--

--"NEEDLES AND PINS"--

--OR "HEED DOLLY!"



"...DIRECT FROM THE PLANET POPPUR, THE IMPOSSIBLE MAN!"

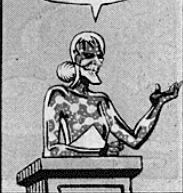
LOOK, BEN, I'VE USED MY SHAPE CHANGING ABILITIES TO TURN MYSELF INTO YOUR BIGGEST FAN!



ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, I, 2 ALWAYS SAID YOU WERE A BLOWHARD...

"...AND IN THE GUISE OF CAPTAIN UNIVERSE, THE SUPER HERO WHO COULD BE YOU, IS THE ASTONISHING AUNT MAY! (THIS TIME FOR SURE...)"

ISN'T IT TIME FOR MILK AND COOKIES YET, DEAR?



UH, NO, NOT QUITE YET, MRS. PAPER. FIRST WE'LL HAVE TO GIVE THE ROASTEES A CHANCE TO ANSWER THE ROASTERS!

HOWABOUT IT, TORCH?



ADMIT IT--YOU ALL THINK YOU'RE PRETTY FUNNY. RIGHT? YOU REALLY ENJOYED BEING COMEDIANS AT OUR EXPENSE!

BUT PARDON ME, FOLKS, IF LOOL VARIATIONS OF "HOT" JOKES ISN'T MY IDEA OF AN EVENING OF SOPHISTICATED HUMOR.



YOU GUYS TRIED THOUGH, AND THAT'S WHAT REALLY COUNTS. SO AS A LITTLE Memento OF THIS EVENING'S ENTERTAINMENT--



--I, GENEROUS SOUL THAT I AM, VOLUNTEER TO AWARD TO ALL THOSE WHO DESERVE IT (AND THAT'S MOST OF YOU)--



--YOUR OWN PERSONAL HOTFOOT!

NO, NO, DON'T THANK ME-- I KNOW HOW MUCH YOU ALL LIKE THAT SORT OF THING...



WE ALL KNOW THAT BEN IS A TOUGH GUY. JOHNNY HAS A HOT TEMPER, AND THAT SHE CAN BE TERRIBLY SHY AT TIMES. BUT WHAT ABOUT *ME* REED RICHARDS?



WELL, SOME PEOPLE THINK I'M ABSENT-MINDED, WITH MY HEAD UP IN THE CLOUDS ALL THE TIME...



NOW HOW'D THEY EVER GET AN IDEA LIKE THAT?!

REALLY, FOLKS: I'M JUST AN EASYGOING, FLEXIBLE KIND OF GUY.



I'D HAVE TO BE, TO BE ABLE TO PUT ON A BIG SMILE AFTER WHAT I'VE LEARNED HERE TODAY!

LITTLE DID I SUSPECT THAT LURKING UNDER DR. DOOM'S ARMS WAS *DOH RICKLES!*



WITH BEN, IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME, AND JOHNNY, AS YOU KNOW, TURNS HIS "FLAME ON."



ME, WELL, I'VE NEVER REALLY HAD THE *NEED* FOR A BATTLE CRY.



UNTIL TONIGHT, THAT IS!

AFTER HEARING ALL THAT'S BEEN SAID ABOUT US HERE THERE'S NOTHING I'D RATHER DO THAN --



--FADE OUT!!



'BYE!

I'D LIKE TO SAY A *THING* OR TWO ABOUT THE *THINGS* WE'VE SAID TODAY!



SOMETHING--ANYTHING WOULD'VE BEEN BETTER THAN SOME OF THE *GRIM* ATTEMPTS AT HUMOR I HEARD HERE TONIGHT. WE SHOULD *SUEF*...



BUT IF I *READ* YOU RIGHT, I SHOULDN'T KICK UP A *STORM* OVER YER COMMENTS, CUZ *THINGS* COULDA BEEN WORSE.



ANYWAY, WHAT CAN I SAY, BUT *THINGS* FOR THE MEMORIES!

"THINGS FOR THE MEMORIES"?!!?



JUST ANOTHER SILLY JOKE.



BLACK BOLT HAS HEARD THEM ALL TONIGHT AND THOUGH HE'S SMILED OFTEN, HE HASN'T LAUGHED ONCE.

YET EVERY MAN HAS HIS BREAKING POINT, EVEN THE KING OF THE INHUMANS.

BLACK BOLT--NO! IT WASN'T *THAT* FUNNY!



BUT IT'S TOO LATE FOR CONSIDERATIONS OF MERIT. THE CHAIN REACTION HAS *BEGUN!*



BLACK BOLT LAUGHS!



HA HA!



THIS IS PROBABLY THE **SILLIEST** COMIC BOOK THE FANTASTIC FOUR HAVE EVER APPEARED IN. BUT SILLINESS ISN'T ANYTHING NEW TO THE F.F. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT BESIDES THE MANY OTHER TRAIL-BLAZING TECHNIQUES THEY INTRODUCED VIA THE FANTASTIC FOUR, **STAN LEE** AND **JACK KIRBY** GAVE US CHARACTERS WHO WERE CAPABLE OF LAUGHING AT THEMSELVES.

DON'T BELIEVE ME? YOU WILL AFTER YOU PERUSE THESE EXAMPLES I'VE REPRODUCED FROM THE TEAM'S EARLY DAYS.

WHAP!



IN F.F.#11 THE THING LEARNS THAT YOU NEVER LOOK A GIFT HORSE IN THE MOUTH--ESPECIALLY IF IT'S FROM THE YANCY STREET GANG!

IN THAT SAME ISSUE, REED TURNS DOWN ANOTHER IN A LONG LINE OF APPLICANTS BENT ON MAKING THE F.F. REDESIGN THEIR INSIGNIAS.

BY THE WAY, MR. RICHARDS, ARE YOU LOOKING TO HIRE ANY NEW MEMBERS FOR YOUR GROUP? I HAVEN'T EXACTLY GOT ANY SUPER POWERS, BUT I CAN WIGGLE MY EARS REAL GOOD, AND--

WE'RE ALL FILLED UP RIGHT NOW, LUMPY. BUT WE'LL KEEP YOU IN MIND, OLD TIMER!



WE ALL KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO WILLIE LUMPKIN. DON'T WE?

THING, YOU'VE GOT A B-I-N-G MOUTH!!

GULMP!

BEN FOUND OUT IN F.F.#29 THAT IF YOU'RE GOING TO SHOOT YOUR MOUTH OFF ON YANCY STREET, IT'S BEST NOT TO STAND UNDER FALLING GARBAGE CANS!

WHAT ABOUT THAT TIME IN F.F.#16 WHEN DR. DOOM'S GURKING RAY WAS MYSTERIOUSLY TAPPING THE GROUP? BEN WAS SO EMBARRASSED THAT HE HIC IN REED'S GUINEA PIG CAGE UNTIL HE COULD FIGURE OUT WHAT WAS GOING ON!

RELAX, CHARLIE! I DON'T WANNA TAKE YOUR BLAMED BEETLE NUT! I JUST WANNA HANG AROUND HERE TILL I WAKE UP OR SOMETHIN'!



THIS IS AN IDOL OF MILLIONS?! SHEESH!

OR HOWABOUT THE TIME IN F.F.#9 WHEN THE GROUP WENT BANKRUPT, THEIR ONLY CHANCE OF SALVATION BEING A TRIP TO HOLLYWOOD? ONLY, THEY DIDN'T HAVE THE CARS, SO--

I'LL STAY OUT OF SIGHT BACK HERE, SO I DON'T SCARE ANYONE AWAY!

SOMEONE'LL STOP SOONER OR LATER!

DON'T BE EMBARRASSED! WE'LL ALL FORGIVE ABOUT THIS ONE DAY!

I HOPE SO!



I GUESS I SHOULDN'T HAVE BLOWN MY STACK, BABY. BUT WHENEVER I THINK OF THOSE YANCY CRUMB-BUMS, I SEE REP!

ARE YOU KIDDIN'? I ALWAYS HAVEN'T TO TRY ONE!

WISH YOU COULD SEE ME, BABY! I'M A LIVIN' DOLL!!



IMAGINE THOSE CREEPS SENDIN' ME A BEATLE WING!!

WHY DON'T YOU JUST THROW IT AWAY, BEN?

MY FAVORITE BIT OCCURRED IN #34, WHICH CAME OUT AT THE HEIGHT OF **BEATLEMANIA** WHEN THE THING GOT YET ANOTHER GIFT FROM THE YANCY STREET GANG...

SO, STAN AND JACK, WE'D JUST LIKE TO THANK YOU AND THE FANTASTIC FOUR FOR OVER 100 ISSUES OF THRILLS, CHILLS, CHUCKLES, AND GUFFAWS! THIS ONE'S BEEN FOR YOU GUYS! 'NUFF SAID!

